

**TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
FISCAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**



**FISCAL NOTE**

**HB 662 - SB 770**

March 4, 2017

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** Reduces, from 2.5 percent of the total number of voters casting votes for gubernatorial candidates in the most recent election to 5,000 registered voters, the number of signatures of registered voters required on a petition to form a minority party. Requires a political party's candidate be elected to a statewide office in the past six calendar years and have received at least 1.5 percent of the total number of votes cast for gubernatorial candidates in the most recent election in order for the party to be considered a statewide political party.

**ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:**

**Increase Local Expenditures –**

**Exceeds \$2,500/FY18-19 and Every Two Years Thereafter\***

**Assumptions:**

- According to vote totals from the 2014 gubernatorial election, 1,353,728 votes were cast statewide for gubernatorial candidates.
- Under current law, pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-1-104, in order to be recognized as a minority party, 33,843 (1,353,728 votes x 2.5%) signatures of registered voters would be required on a petition filed with the Coordinator of Elections.
- The proposed language would reduce the number of signatures required to 5,000.
- Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-1-104, in order for a political party to be considered a statewide political party, the party's candidate is required to be elected to statewide office and receive five percent of the votes cast for gubernatorial candidates in the last gubernatorial election.
- The proposed language would reduce the number of votes a party's candidate would be required to receive to 1.5 percent, or 20,306 (1,353,728 votes x 1.5%) votes, and require the candidate to have received that number of votes in the past six years.
- The proposed language will result in a greater number of minor and statewide political parties placed on election ballots.
- According to the Department of State, increasing the number of recognized parties which can be included on an election ballot will lengthen election ballots, which will in turn increase the length of sample ballots which are printed in newspapers, pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-5-211, and increase the number of ballots which must be printed for elections, required pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-5-201.

- Not all counties hold partisan elections for local office; therefore, it is assumed the increased cost will be incurred during elections for statewide office, or every two years.
- The extent of minor and statewide political parties formed as a direct result of the proposed language is unknown; however, it is reasonably estimated the increase in political parties printed on an election ballot will result in a mandatory increase in local government expenditures exceeding \$2,500 beginning in FY18-19 and occurring every two years thereafter.

*\*Article II, Section 24 of the Tennessee Constitution provides that: no law of general application shall impose increased expenditure requirements on cities or counties unless the General Assembly shall provide that the state share in the cost.*

## **CERTIFICATION:**

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Krista M. Lee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Krista M. Lee, Executive Director

/jrh